A U M

Speak the truth, do not yield to anger; give, if thou art asked, from the little thou hast; by those steps thou wilt go near the gods. —DHAMMAPADA.

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THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF EMERSON'S PHILOSOPHY

MANY attempts have been made to compare the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson with other systems of thought. When it is compared with Theosophy, a new point of view must be taken. For Theosophy is not *a* philosophy, but the Root-Source from which all philosophies have sprung. It is not the result of one man's speculation, but the synthesis of the knowledge of the ages which has been accumulated, recorded and preserved by a long line of Adepts. It is a complete *whole*, and admits of no comparison with anything less than itself. All that can be done, in the case of a single philosopher, is to examine the fruit of his mind in order to see if it was grown in the Garden of Wisdom.

Many are the Gardeners who have nurtured the Tree of Knowledge which grows in the midst of this Garden. The Theosophist knows Them as the Mahatmas. Emerson described Them in these words:

> "I cannot recite the laws of the intellect without remembering that lofty and sequestered class of men who have been its prophets and oracles, the high priesthood of pure reason, the *Trismegisti*, the expounders of the principles of thought from age to age. The truth and grandeur of their thought is proved by its scope and applicability, for it commands the entire schedule and inventory of things for its illustration."

In the teachings of these "great spiritual lords" as Emerson calls Them, certain fundamental concepts appear as the central sun around which the entire system of philosophical thought revolves. They are epitomized in a few pages of the *Secret Doctrine* as the "Three Fundamental Propositions" and are summarized

by Emerson in the three Essays which are the most widely read of all his works: The Over-soul, Compensation, and Self-Reliance.

The First Fundamental Proposition treats of that Unity which lies behind all diversity—That which contains all and pervades all, That from which all proceeds and into which all eventually is absorbed. Emerson realized the philosophical necessity of such a concept. Finding no satisfactory expression of it in the religious teachings of his own day and race, he sought for it within the philosophy of the ancient Aryans. The method he pursued in his search for the Causeless Cause which lies behind all causes is outlined in the Katha Upanishad:

> "Than the powers, the impulses are higher;
> Than the impulses, Mind is higher;
> Than Mind, Soul is higher; than Soul, the Great Self.
> Than the Great Self, the Unmanifest is higher;
> Than the Unmanifest, Spirit is higher;
> This is the end, the supreme way."

Emerson's Westernized version of this Eastern teaching is found in his essay on Plato:

> "The mind is urged to ask for one Cause of many effects; then for the cause of that; and again the cause, diving still into the profound; self-assured that it shall arrive at an Absolute and sufficient one; a One that shall be All."

In that deep force, he says, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. Being behind the power of analysis, beyond the range and reach of thought and speech, Emerson was too wise to attempt to describe it.

> "Of that ineffable Essence which we call Spirit, he that thinks most will say least. When we try to describe it, both language and thought desert us. That Essence refuses to be recorded. Language cannot paint it with colors. It is too subtle. It is undefinable, unmeasurable, but we know that it pervades and contains us."

Then, starting with that basic Unity as a postulate, he watched the One become many, and affirmed the necessity of both Unity and diversity.

> "Every chemical substance, every plant, every animal in its growth, teaches the Unity of Cause, the variety of appearance."

Nature appeared to him as a shadow, indicating the presence of the sun behind, suggesting the Absolute, yet never defining it. The various substances out of which Nature's forms are compounded might seem to be divided at their base, yet in their summits they are all united:

> "The Same, the Same; friend and foe are of one stuff; the ploughman, the plough and the furrow are of one stuff; and the stuff is such, and so much, that the variations of form are unimportant."

"All is One" he repeats again and again, "the act of seeing, the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object." Spirit lurks in every form and beckons to Spirit in every other form. And that in which all things are united is:

> " . . . that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular nature is contained and made one with all other: that common heart, of which all conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission."

The Second fundamental basic idea of Emerson's philosophy is found in his recognition of the Universe as a boundless plane, periodically the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing. In "The American Scholar" he says:

> "There is never a beginning, there is never an end to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always a *circular power returning to itself.* Therein it resembles man's own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he can never find."

Emerson's recognition of the Law of Periodicity paved the way for his acceptance of the fact that duality pervades all natural processes. The whole of nature appeared to him as bisected by an inevitable dualism, so that each thing perceived is only a half, and demands another half to make it a whole:

> "Polarity, or action and reaction, we meet in every part of nature; in darkness and light; in heat and cold; in the ebb and flow of waters; in male and female; in the inspiration and expiration of plants and animals; in the systole and diastole of the heart; in the centrifugal and centripetal gravity; in the undulations of fluids and of sound; in electricity, galvanism and chemical affinity."

The human mind, with its separative tendency, constantly tries to dissociate these two halves and to consider one without its relation to the other. But Nature refuses to be thus divided. The parted water re-unites behind our hand. We can no more act without feeling the reaction than we can hope to find an inside without an outside, a top without a bottom. Not even spirit and matter can be thought of as things in themselves, for they are but two aspects of one and the same thing:

> "Once men thought Spirit divine, and Matter diabolical; now science and philosophy recognize the parallelism, the ap-

> proximation, the unity of the two; how each reflects the other as face answers to face in a glass; nay, how the laws of both are one."

The Law of Action and Reaction, when applied to the moral plane, becomes, according to Emerson, a sort of multiplication table, which, turn it as we will, forever balances itself. Every crime will be punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty:

> "What we call Retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears whenever a part appears. The causal retribution is in the thing, and is seen by the soul. The retribution in the circumstance is seen by the understanding; is inseparable from the thing, but is often spread over a long time, and so does not become distinct until after many years. Cause and effect, means and end, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the fruit in the seed."

The really wise man, he says, will extend this lesson to every department of his life, and realize that it is the part of prudence to pay his debts on whatever plane. Persons and events may seem to stand for a time between a man and justice. But this is only a postponement, for sooner or later the man must pay.

This passage might give the impression that Emerson was a fatalist, that he considered man to be the helpless victim of his own previous actions. But Emerson's views of Karma were purely Theosophical, as is shown in this passage from his *Transcendentalist*:

> "You think me the child of my circumstances. *I make my circumstances.* Let any thought or motive of mine be different from what they are, the difference will transform my condition. You call it the power of circumstance. But it is the power of *me*!"

The Third Fundamental Proposition of the *Secret Doctrine* presents a picture of the vast sweep of evolution, from the elemental kingdoms up to the holiest archangel. All is Life. The idea of "dead matter" is inconceivable. Every spark that issues from that pure Essence—the Over-soul—is intelligent, and evolution consists in the unfoldment of that intelligence. In his Essay on "Nature" Emerson presents the same view:

> "There is a latent omniscience not only in man, but in every particle. There is a force in every creature that impels it to ascend to higher forms of life. Plants are the young of the world, but they grope ever upward towards consciousness."

Emerson's radical views on "living matter" as opposed to the "dead matter" theory of the science of his day were not in the

least disturbed by the publication of the "Origin of Species" in 1859. He still continued to assert that Science, by confining its speculations to matter and ignoring Spirit, could never reach ultimate truth; and that Religion, by limiting itself to Spirit and ignoring matter, was in the same condition. He saw that something was needed which took both into account and offered a basis of reconciliation. This basis he offered to the world as his Ideal Theory.

The trouble with Science, as he points out in "The Poet" is that it is purely sensual, and therefore superficial. The true scientist must deal with forms *according to the life within* if he hopes to fathom the secrets of Nature. He turned again to the East for a corroboration of his scientific theories and prophesied that "the avatars of Brahma will presently be the text-books on natural history." In his Journal of 1866 he gives a dissertation on the Eastern views of Science, and shows how Science can perform its real function only when it learns to separate the real from the unreal and arrives at the contemplation of the One Life and the One Cause.

As both Nature and man are rooted in the same identical Essence, as both emanated from the same neutral center to re-merge into it at the end of the cycle, where then lies the difference between the two? It is contained in a single word. The kingdoms below man are *conscious*; man is *self-conscious*. The "Soul" of man is that permanent principle in him which changes not, but which is able to perceive the changes going on around him.

> "The soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all organs. It is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but *uses* these as hands and feet. It is not a faculty, but a light. It is not the intellect or the will, but the *Master* of the intellect and the will. It is the vast background in which they lie, an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed."

Emerson called the Soul in man the Thinker and Actor, the Observer, the Perceiver and Revealer of Truth. He considered it as immutable, superior to its knowledge, the God Within;

> "When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection it is love; and the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself."

Emerson considered the Soul as an evolving, *becoming* entity. Its advances, he says, are not made by gradation, such as can be

expressed by motion in a straight line, but rather by an *ascension of state.* There are stairs on the ladder of evolution, he continues, which we have already climbed; but there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight. How can these stairs be climbed save through the process of Reincarnation? It is apparent that Emerson considered this idea as the only logical one:

> "The soul having often been born, having beheld the things that are here, those which are in heaven and those which are beneath, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge. No wonder that she is able to recollect what formerly she knew."

Soul-growth means a growth in perception, in knowledge, and in the realization of our own inherent perfection. The way to this realization lies within ourselves, and can be brought about only through our own "self-induced and self-devised efforts." The clarion-tone of *Self-Reliance* rings through the entire philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson like a deep organ-point. It reached him in his boyhood like a faint echo from the past, and he intoned it steadily throughout his entire life.

Self-Reliance meant to him a reliance upon the God within. He found all the virtues comprehended in the word *Self-Trust*, and was convinced that there would come a time in the life of every man when he would have to take himself for better or worse; when he would realize that "no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till." Every heart in the Universe, he says, vibrates to the iron string "Trust Thyself!"

Self-reliance is the very sap of the man-tree. That sap must be kept flowing constantly—upward and downward—striving ceaselessly toward the higher, conquering daily the lower:

> "Ah brother, hold fast to the man and awe the beast; stop the ebb of thy soul—ebbing downward into the forms into whose habits thou hast now for many years slid."

Ralph Waldo Emerson sounded the battle-cry to the warrior-soul, the trumpet blast that spurs each man into action. That which energizes the warrior is his own power of Self-Reliance, his capacity to move from the spiritual center within, his determination to sacrifice the lower to the higher. The end of the battle will surely come when

> " . . . the soul is raised over passion. It seeth identity and Eternal Causation. It is a perceiving that Truth and Right are. Hence it becomes a Tranquillity."

TOWARD SANITY

> Behold the Host of Souls. Watch how they hover o'er the stormy sea of human life, and how, exhausted, bleeding, broken-winged, they drop one after other on the swelling waves. Tossed by the fierce winds, chased by the gale, they drift into the eddies and disappear within the first great vortex.
>
> —*Voice of the Silence.*

IN what frenzied fashion fellow-beings drive themselves, or are driven in this mad world teeming with meaningless activity! Apparently sane, each reveals or conceals some "eccentricity," not marked perhaps; harmless, as a rule. Over indulge a worthy hobby and you are thrown off-balance; a disregard for the fitness of things "unfits" you for right participation in the common concerns of life. Is it then only a question of the degree of sanity? But the pendulum of life swings with fateful precision in opposite directions. In the midst of apparent madness there is a fundamental "harmony." Sooner or later it is sensed, felt, realized.

Perhaps tragedy strikes. With a single stroke all that is cherished is wiped out. There is nothing to live for, yet we live on, newly aware of another side of our nature. The "outside" *we* goes on as before; the personality—this *thing* which "we have with pain created for our own use"—goes on eating and sleeping perfunctorily, talking, even laughing, which somehow does not seem strange although we imagine that it should. But another "we" disinterestedly takes note, aware only of perceiving both the outward show and the inner response. We have for the time being over-stepped the bounds of our self-created round of action, cutting off from outward attractions by inward retreat. We experience the feeling of timelessness, boundlessness, a liberation from persons and customs and things. This is a critical stage, rich with mighty possibilities. Looking from outside in, we simply "don't care" about anything; looking from within outward, a state of equipoise has been reached; feelings are stilled, prejudices and barriers have dropped away; the ground is ready for the Seed of Brotherhood to take root and grow.

If we will, the boon of a lifetime is within our grasp. Under no circumstances can the old relations be entered into again. At mere thought of them, a stillness like death pervades the nature. What to do then? Seek an Ideal that is timeless, boundless, free of any barriers, inclusive of all distinctions—the Ideal of Universal Brotherhood.

At appointed times in the course of Humanity's evolution, Great Ones called Avatars come "to strike a *key-note* of Truth," directing the vibration "to run its course uninterruptedly along the concatenation of the race to the end of the cycle." They appear on earth "only at the beginning of every new human race, and at the junction or close of the two ends of the small and great cycle." But Man epitomizes the Universe, and therefore the same plan and the same law obtains in the evolution of each individual as for the Avatar. We reach a point where we must "strike the key-note of Truth" *each for himself,* consciously, deliberately, and because it is seen to be the only thing to do. This is our Moment of Choice.

Now the theosophic ideal of Brotherhood must be made a living power in everyday life, involving with it a due and natural recognition of the Great Ones, Their mission and Their nature. In this recognition is implicit another: that of our own ignorance—perceived dispassionately—as also gratitude for the opportunity *to know.* But the first real step to take is a negative one, as an ancient pledge puts it: ". . . never to listen without protest to any evil thing said of another." Instantly, however, a firm position is called for; restraint of the lower nature by the higher, and consideration for others are demanded. Now one knows what is implied in the injunction of the Teachers of old when they cried, "Come ye out and be ye separate." An "isolation" has inevitably resulted. A dead-line is drawn, a circle-pass-not against condemnation—incoming and out-going.

In a world of madness, alive with condemnation, criticism, fault-finding, and gossip, a beneficent and courageous stand has been taken. We have shut ourselves off from noting the faults of others, but we have shut ourselves *in* with our own. We are now "face to face" with our own shortcomings. We find some "virtues" heretofore unsuspected, but over and against these an overwhelming "lower nature." No need to look further for defects, with such a brilliantly blooming growth in our own garden! The Voice of Compassion speaks anew in our heart and we become charitable to the weaknesses of others; we know that, were we in their place, we could see only as they see and could not do other than they do; that as they see better, they will do better. Moreover, must be no flaunting of "virtues" or powers. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" is an occult maxim. "That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall

make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men" takes on more intimate meaning. Those who can appreciate our "virtues" will find us out; or, perhaps to our chagrin, we shall be "found out" sooner than we imagine in our failings!

Our greatest virtue lies in and grows from the overcoming of our weaknesses and defects. This work in and on ourselves clarifies our intellectual perceptions and establishes us in a unique relation to our fellow-beings, making us in a subtle sense "our brother's keeper." Ours the duty and privilege to help him find a "balance"; to ever seek the higher, to hold to the better rather than the dearer. Knowledge is necessary, but true knowledge is that which "springs up spontaneously within" as we work over the raw material at hand. *All that we have experienced—good or bad—may yield us knowledge and be put to use for others.*

With each effort made, a bond of actual brotherhood is cemented. New values are given to old familiar things. And, slowly, there dawns in a realizing sense a new evaluation of reticence. Speech is a power divine—a benediction when used by the Wise, yet a means of maddening confusion or betrayal when in the use of fools or knaves. We are not all-wise. And since individual evolution goes forward only through self-induced and self-devised exertions, the less we confuse others the greater service we render them. It is written: "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." Right speech for us will be to hold forth the true modulus—the science and philosophy of Ethics; let our *living* be example.

The purpose of evolution for the individual is to arouse intuition and develop self-reliance. We must not interfere with this divine purpose; but as we tread the Path cautiously and fearlessly, not seeing far ahead perhaps, but feeling our ground safely, we become centres of harmony, and by so much the confusion lessens. The law is that the Harmony which is the Heart of the Universe can only dwell in each race, when it dwells in the units of that race.

"INDULGENCES"

HISTORY, above all, theological history, is replete with the numerous varieties of the "coin of the realm" of thought—not to divert attention to the emissions of fiat currency, the "promises to pay", accepted as an "article of faith" from generation to generation in the sects which spawn like mushrooms (toad-stools, rather).

Of all the many religious and sectarian fictions, all "founded on fact", none has a more international circulation, inter-creedal acceptance, than the doctrine of "indulgence" in one form and another. We need not fancy it is peculiar to the dogmas of the Holy Catholic Church, for it and its correlatives form the substratum as well as the structure of all and every world-religion as of all and sundry of the sects in each.

The Catholic is the most definitely commercialized, so the easiest to study, in its spirit as well as its letter. But first, let it be understood *sans disputation* that the principle of Reason inheres in all nature and in each man. Hegel voiced a great truth in saying: "Reason governs the World and has consequently governed its actions." Reason in action, impersonally considered, *i.e.*, as the fulcrum or axis of all motion and of all conduct, is otherwise termed in science. There it is called Law, and in Religion it is the Will of God, while others know it as fate, chance, luck, fortune, destiny, and so on.

The Principle of reason is one thing, the use made of it, the results thereby accruing, quite others. These three are the theological Trinity, the Newtonian laws of motion, the metaphysical lever in the worlds psychic and spiritual as its physical counterpart is in the world of "force and matter". Thus there is "Reason in all things", a reason for everything; and, as H. P. Blavatsky phrased it, there must be "the rational explanation of things" however "irrational" those things may appear to be. Theosophy is that rational explanation of religion, science, philosophy, their heterogeneous and conflicting contents, which reduces them to unity, that is, to law and order—and that, again, is but another way of saying, traces all effects to their causes, all phenomena to their noumena, and dissolves all these in their source—the Principles of intelligence, action and reason, *per se*.

"Indulgences" represent the fruits of reason as used to defend

and extend the doctrines or dogmas (*a*) of a Personal God; (*b*) of His power to inflict punishment or bestow reward at His will and pleasure; (*c*) His Revelation of that will and pleasure through the Prophets, through the Son, through the "still small Voice" within each creature man; (*d*) His Representative on earth since the Crucifixion, which is to say Peter (*petra*, a rock), the Rock on which Christ is alleged to have declared he would build his Church, the Papal edifice housing that Church by Apostolic Succession.

All this being assumed by the priesthood and granted by the believer, the use made by both of their principle of reason works out as mathematically, that is, logically, as the demonstration of the theorem in geometry leads to the various corollaries dependent on any major proposition.

So, the foregoing being reasoned out to their conclusions and applications, the Church speaking apostolically *is* the Voice of God. What it binds, God binds; what it looses, God sets free. It is infallible because God is infallible; its decretals are His decrees —in short, "man proposes, but God (in the Person of the Church) disposes". All this is strictly logical and leads inevitably, when logically followed up, to the various dogmas of vicarious atonement, of works of superorogation, of the "Treasury of Works", of forgiveness of sins, of eternal damnation for the unbeliever, of "the Kingdom of Heaven" for the elect and the pardoned.

Granting that there is "sin", and that it can be "forgiven", the dogma of "indulgences" follows naturally, that is, logically. This, it may be remarked in passing, also logically leads to the conclusions (1) that the "creation" of man not only was, but still is, a failure on the part of the Creator as well as the creature, hence that both God and Church are more concerned with "sinners" than with those sinned against; (2) that the whole immense structure of revelation, religion, and all their imposing contents, is but a Universal Bankruptcy Court in which spiritual, moral, ethical, and intellectual "discharges" may be obtained—by an *auto da fé* in God, but at a fixed price so far as His Church is concerned. Inevitably, such a doctrine and such doctrines could but be extremely palatable at all times to those who had more appetite, and therefore more "reason", to think of their own welfare than that of others, who feel no zest to pay their debts to nature or to man. "God *is* good" to all such—if we are to consider logically the symbiotic relations of the priest and the penitent.

Always popular, these doctrines are abundantly worshiped today. We may look for a great recrudescence of religion and religions between now and 1975. Do we not hear on every hand, "What the world needs is a new religion, or a revival of the existing ones?" Demand and supply are logical counterparts. This was all foretold as far back as 1881 by a *Mahatma*, and are not Theosophists themselves busily engaged in many quarters, trying to make a new religion out of the Secret Doctrines restored by H. P. Blavatsky?

If "sin" can be pardoned by an act of grace of the great Referee in Bankruptcy, the logical implications of the dogma are well worth looking into. The Church looked into them long ago. Here are some of the fruits of its able logicians.

God can forgive, through His representative, our past sins; hence, therefore, our present sins are equally within the efficacy of that pardoning power; and by logical sequence, our future sins may by the same divine dispensation be remitted in advance of their commission. This, followed out logically and literally, ends with the foregone conclusion that "indulgence" can be had for the dead as well as the living—for who "shall set limits to the power of God the Omnipotent?"

Has the Church done that? It has. Does the Church do that? It does. And not the Holy Church Catholic alone. Study the doctrines and dogmas of any religion, any sect, and beneath the multi-colored garb of verbiage will in every case be found the identical assumptions, the identical use of the reasoning principle, the identical appeal.

No wonder H. P. B. sounded her defiance in the Preface to the first volume of *Isis Unveiled*; no wonder her closing words to that Preface, her entrance into the arena: MORITURUS TE SALUTAT. No Wonder she says in the Preface to the second volume:

> "We cast our gauntlet at the dogmatic theologians who would enslave both history and science; and especially at the Vatican."

THE SEVENFOLD PLAN

A MAJOR contribution to the thought and knowledge of Mankind was made when the *Secret Doctrine* revealed a Seven-fold Plan of Universal Evolution, a Plan which heretofore had not been distinctly recorded for the public at large. The main objective of all philosophic speculation may be stated as being the discovery of the basic laws and plans within and behind the visible universe. The philosophy of Theosophy, at the very outset draws attention to the distinction between the Manifested Universe and the Unmanifested; between the active state of Being and the passive state, in which all differentiation has disappeared, and which is termed "Non-Being." Only the active state of the One Life can be known and speculated upon. From the dawn of differentiation to its twilight and close, the Universe unfolds in accordance with a Basic Sevenfold Plan. This Plan exists even during the Pralayic periods of rest, which follow the periods of manifestation and activity as night does day. On the first page of the *Proem* of the *Secret Doctrine* it is stated: "It is on this plane (the plane of the Universal Soul) that the Manvantaric manifestations begin; for it is in this SOUL that slumbers during the Pralaya, the Divine Thought, wherein lies concealed the plan of every future Cosmogony and Theogony."

The inherent potency to differentiate must exist even when the Universe returns to a state of Homogeneity; for, were it otherwise, there could be no succeeding period of manifestation. The *Secret Doctrine* calls this sevenfold plan in its potential state before manifestation, "The Seven-Skinned Eternal Mother-Father." In the "Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge," the meaning of the "Seven-Skinned Mother-Father" is given as follows: "Plato and Hermes Trismegistus would have regarded this as the *Divine Thought,* and Aristotle would have viewed this 'Mother-Father' as the 'privation' of matter. It is that which will become the seven planes of being, commencing with the spiritual and passing through the psychic to the material plane. The seven planes of thought or the seven states of consciousness correspond to these planes. All these septenaries are symbolized by the seven 'skins'."

When the *Secret Doctrine* posits a Sevenfold Plan of Universal Evolution, it does not imply a "Planner" any more than the term "Divine Thought" implies a *Thinker.* The terms represent those metaphysical abstractions, beyond which the human intellect is incapable of forming an intelligible concept. Behind the Seven-

fold Plan and the Divine Thought stands the Immutable LAW of periodical manifestation. This LAW becomes perceptible as a "Plan" and as "Ideation" when it reflects Itself in the Collective Consciousness of the Beings who make up a particular field of evolution. In the first volume of the *Secret Doctrine,* page 44 we read:

> According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of that supposed desire, (the desire for sentient life) and of all existence, remains for ever hidden, and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive. These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material Universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect; and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and gods by the common herd of every age.

While the Sevenfold Plan presupposes no planner as its author, yet Beings are concerned in the evolutionary process, first, last and all the time. The unfoldment and construction of the Universe is analogous to the construction of a building. First, there arises a WILL or desire on the part of some person or group of persons for the erection of the particular building. This *corresponds* to the Immutable LAW of periodical manifestation. Second, the inspirers of the building communicate their desire and purpose to an architect, in whose mind that desire is reflected in an ideal form. This ideal concept in the mind of the architect is in its turn reduced to a concrete plan or design fixed upon a convenient substance, such as paper. This is the first objective representation of the desire of the original builders and its ideal reflection in the thought of the architect. After this begins the work of actual construction by the various groups of workmen, until the entire plan is consummated in the finished building. The various groups of workmen correspond to the different Hierarchies of Celestial Beings who partake in the work of Cosmic Construction in fulfillment of the Plan in the Universal Mind. The work performed by each hierarchy is determined by the stage in evolution attained by the Beings in past cycles. In essence, all of these Hierarchies and the Beings composing them are identical and hence on the highest plane, or that of their essential nature; they are as yet indistinguishable and offer no obstruction to the perfect reflection of the Great Sevenfold Plan of Evolution. With reference to the essential identity of the various Hierarchies, H. P. B. states in the Transactions:

> In reality these fires are not separate, any more than are the souls or monads to him who sees beyond the veil of matter or

> illusion. . . . But if we seek to separate them on this plane of illusion, then all I can say is, that there exists between these Hierarchies the same abyssess of distinction as between the "principles" of the Universe or those of man, if you like, and the same "principles" in a bacillus.

With reference to the condition of "the luminous sons of manvantaric dawn" on the *arupa* or formless plane, we read in the *Transactions:*

> They are the primordial seven rays from which will emanate in their turn all the other luminous and non-luminous lives, whether Archangels, Devils, men or apes. Some have been and some will only now become human beings. It is only after the differentiation of the seven rays and after the seven forces of nature have taken them in hand and worked upon them, that they become cornerstones, or rejected pieces of clay. Everything, therefore, is in these seven rays, but it is impossible to say at this stage in which, because they are not yet differentiated and individualized.

A distinction must be made between the Sevenfold Plan as a pure abstraction, and its operation in conjunction with a concrete programme of evolution. The bare noumenal Plan is one thing; its working in the numberless universes which come and go in the boundless infinitudes of Space, another. Although the General Plan governs all Globes and Solar Systems, no two worlds have the same scheme of evolutionary unfoldment. In "The Key to Theosophy," we read: "Though the fundamental law and the universal working of laws of Nature are uniform, still our Solar System (like every other such system in the millions of others in Cosmos) and even our Earth, has its own programme of manifestations differing from the respective programmes of all others." Not only does this apply to worlds and systems of worlds, but also to the countless Beings of every description inhabiting and composing said worlds and systems. While the essential natures of all Beings is the same, the acquired natures present the widest variations—"from the sea-weed to the cedar of Lebanon, from the jelly-fish to the elephant, from the Bushman and negro to the Apollo Belvedere." In the skeleton outline of the Stanzas of the Secret Doctrine, it is stated that the Stanzas "give an abstract formula which can be applied *mutatis mutandis,* to all evolution: to that of our tiny earth, to that of the chain of planets of which that earth forms one, to the solar Universe to which that chain belongs, and so on, in an ascending scale, till the mind reels and is exhausted in the effort." We have, therefore, the Great Plan

behind the manifestations of all Worlds and their Beings, and the infinite applications of that Plan to the differing Karmic conditions of said Worlds and Beings.

The inherent power to reflect the Great Plan of Cosmic Unfoldment is possessed not only by the Beings of a given Cosmos as a collective aggregate; but also by each Being individually. This power is retained by every Being throughout the entire course of the Manvantara, or the gradual descent from Spirit to matter and back again. Leibnitz appears to have been the only speculative philosopher who had an intuitive grasp of this idea. As stated in the *Secret Doctrine,* Vol. I, page 630: "His 'reduced universes' of which 'there are as many as there are Monads'—is the chaotic representation of our Septenary System with its divisions and subdivisions." According to Leibnitz, the Monads are living mirrors of the universe, but he was not able to go any farther and show the differences in the reflective power of the Monads. As stated on page 631 of Vol. I of the *Secret Doctrine.* "It is at this point that Leibnitz's philosophy breaks down. There is no provision made, nor any distinction established, between the 'Elemental' monad and that of a high Planetary Spirit, or even the human monad or Soul." Every Monad is a Being on a pilgrimage and hence, not merely a passive reflector, but, in addition, an active participant in the fulfillment of the Grand Plan. The highest Beings are those whose participation is so complete that they may be said to be the direct agents and embodiments of the LAW and the PLAN. They retain the power to reflect the Plan in all its perfection as they descend and ascend from plane to plane and sphere to sphere. Other Beings reflect the Plan only partially, the degree depending upon their past evolutionary development. On the highest plane where matter offers little, if any, obstacle, all the Beings share in the general knowledge. As the Beings descend, the matter of the various planes obscures the vision of those who have not yet learned to penetrate the various veils, and so only *aspects* of the Great Plan are seen and known. When these aspects are mistaken for the whole, then erroneous conclusions are drawn and wrong courses of action pursued—and this is the condition of the vast majority of Mankind. The lowest class of Beings are those whose active participation in the Septenary Plan is so insignificant that they are, virtually, nothing but passive reflectors —as are those beings in the various elemental kingdoms. The purpose of evolution for every being is to acquire the power to

carry through the knowledge and the vision of the highest plane to all other planes including the lowest.

In the Second Chapter of "The Ocean of Theosophy," Mr. Judge gives the divisions of the sevenfold universe roughly as: The Absolute, Spirit, Mind, Matter, Will, Akasa or Aether, and Life. The concept of these terms in Theosophy differs radically from the ideas about them held by science and speculative philosophy. In Theosophy, since they are differentiations in Unity, the seven divisions have a definite relationship with one another; they are One in the Unity from which they have emanated. As the whole of manifested space is filled with living beings, these divisions represent great orders of beings as well as powers and forces. Spirit would then be a term which would include those perfected Beings who are the self-conscious carriers of the Great Plan of Evolution, and who work incessantly and unerringly to bring the Plan to fruition. Every cycle of manifestation opens and closes with these Great Souls, the word manvantara meaning: "between Manus." During the periods of obscuration or *Pralaya,* these great ones remain as the Seed or *Sishta* of the next humanity. "Matter" would represent the Beings at the opposite pole, or those who are the unconscious and wholly passive reflectors of the Plan, who blindly follow a path already laid out for them. Mind would represent all *Manasa-putras,* or these possessed of minds capable of comprehending in any degree the purpose and goal of the pilgrimage through the Cycle of Necessity. Spirit, Mind and Matter would, therefore, represent the three major classes into which the Monadic Host is divided. The other divisions laid down by Mr. Judge may be considered as resultants of the interactions of these three classes of Beings with one another. Will is the power to so interact and is the force emanating direct from Spirit. Akasa is produced from Matter and Spirit and hence represents the first and highest incarnation of spirit in matter. This is the vesture of all Beings during the entire manvantara and may be said to be the Substance of the Soul. "Life" is a further interaction—"a resultant of the action of Akasa, moved by Spirit, upon Matter." It is through this interaction between the three major classes of Monads—Spirit, Mind and Matter, that the three lines of evolution—spiritual, intellectual and physical are joined. Man represents that juncture and it is through Man that the lowest class is raised to the dignity and stature of Conscious Godhood.

The concept of Unity in Occult Philosophy is such that no matter

how infinite the manifestations, the One Reality remains ever unaffected. "I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate." This idea is basic and runs through the entire philosophy like a golden thread. On page 130 of Volume I of the *Secret Doctrine* we read:

> Moreover, in Occult metaphysics there are, properly speaking, two "ONES"—the One on the unreachable plane of Absoluteness and Infinity, on which no speculation is possible, and the Second "One" on the plane of Emanations. The former can neither emanate nor be divided, as it is eternal, absolute, and immutable. The Second, being, so to speak, the reflection of the first One (for it is the Logos, or Eswara, in the Universe of Illusion), can do all this. It emanates from itself—as the upper Sephirothal Triad emanates the lower seven Sephiroth—the seven Rays or Dhyan Chohans; in other words, the Homogeneous becomes the Heterogeneous, the "Protyle" differentiates into the Elements.

It is the existence of the "Second One" and the majestic reign of LAW throughout all of its parts and emanations which makes the First ONE an inevitable postulate. Unless there were THAT which was absolutely immutable and exhaustless, it would be impossible to perceive change or to observe the unerring operation of cause and effect in every department of life. The basic Law of the manifested Universe is that of the septenary constitution and unfoldment of all Worlds and Beings—all of them replicas of the Universal Kosmos and Its Sevenfold Plan.

It was remarked by H. P. B. that the key to the mysteries of Cosmic Evolution must be turned *seven* times before the whole system is divulged. In "Isis Unveiled" one turn of the key was given, and in the *Secret Doctrine* much more was explained. But we are not to conclude that the last word has been recorded on the Great Sevenfold Plan. This is possibly what Mr. Judge meant when in his *Notes* to the Seventh Chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita he wrote: "No particular theosophical classification for the divisions of nature has been given out. It would on the one hand not be understood, and on the other, disputes leading to no good end would follow." One of the great pitfalls to be avoided is rigid metaphysical concepts. It is such mental rigidity which is responsible for the crystallization of the teachings of the Wisdom-religion into sectarian dogmas. These thoughts on the Sevenfold Plan are offered merely as observations culled from the works of the Teachers of this era.

WHY DEATH AT ALL?

A CORRESPONDENT raises an interesting, albeit an old question indeed. He writes:

> It is as logically impossible that anything could ever be "annihilated" as it is that it could ever have been "created". And yet—and yet, things are constantly being born and as constantly dying. Our bodies are "matter"; our vitality, our energies of mind, our will, are all forms of "force". Why, then, "death" at all? In a Universe of indestructible *material* or *personnel*, "death" seems a contradiction, an absurdity, an anomaly, a paradox. Yet, along with birth, "it is the surest thing we know"—or rather, don't know.

Perhaps, like the mammalian animals (which include ourselves physically and sentiently), death itself, "along with birth", *is* actually what H. P. B. says (*Secret Doctrine*, II, 685): a "*new importation into our planet's area*". It is elsewhere stated both that "the First Race never died", and that there still exist on earth "Those who never die."

So early as the second Chapter in *Bhagavad-Gita* the same considerations are raised as our Correspondent recites, and discussed throughout this greatest of all treatises. What is, of course, needed is a revision of our prevailing notions of "time", "matter", "force", "form", and "creation, preservation, and destruction"—*i.e.*, "birth" and "death."

Some matter-of-fact statements from *Isis Unveiled* may lead in the direction of such "revision"—for the word when analyzed simply means re-vision: seeing the same sights again in another light. Thus:

> "*Metempsychosis* . . . in its application to the indestructibility of matter and the immortality of spirit . . . would be found to supply every 'missing link'" [in science and theology].—(*Isis Unveiled*, I, 8-9).
>
> " . . . an elemental spirit contains only one" [of the four Elements]; the law of evolution finds its illustration in the combination of all four in him" [man].—*Isis Unveiled*, I, 343, foot-note.

Reflect, in the light of the foregoing, on the Buddha's dying words: *"all compounds are perishable."*

YOUTH-COMPANIONS' FORUM

BIOLOGISTS *may be divided into two distinct schools, the Mechanists and the Vitalists. What basic misconception has the Mechanist? What lack the Vitalists? Would you say a student of Theosophy belongs in either class? Why?*

(*a*) The Mechanist believes that all forces, powers and perceptions, whether human or not are the mechanical functions of the matter that makes up an organism. As the Mechanist himself shows, human powers do not differ from the internal molecular motions of the stone. If this theory is carried out to its limit, it would indicate that conscious phenomena may occur in any object except for the lack of a suitable instrument for expression. But Mechanists do not go that far, as it would lead to a belief in Pantheism—the doctrine that the universe in its totality is "God." This to them is even a greater horror than the personal God idea. They claim the origin of living matter is the coming into existence of the first protoplasm from inorganic constituents. Forces brought about the formation of material compounds of ever-increasing complexity until at length living matter itself came into existence. So the Mechanist has separated consciousness and life from matter as an attribute, just as the Theologians have separated Deity from matter.

The great difficulty of the Mechanist is to concoct a theory that will explain to his satisfaction the self-evident purposiveness in life; for example, the universal tendency of organisms to maintain their own patterns, from the human down to the atom. The great error of Mechanism is failure to see that if purposiveness can be ascribed to rudimentary matter, then the whole universe is alive, is conscious and has a purpose.

The Vitalist believes in an immaterial, vital force, to which, when present in organized matter, the functions peculiar to living beings have been ascribed. He considers matter to be inert and vaguely admits a conscious principle to certain forms of life while denying it to others. It is only another "Scientific" method of expressing and reconciling the "God" idea. It is all very well when the Vitalist shows purposiveness in living organisms, but how does he explain the evident purposiveness in the minutests of things—the atom? The atom has the remarkable tendency of restoring its pattern whenever it loses an electron. Is a stone inert and dead

when the scientific fact is that its molecules are constantly whirling around? Motion exists in every spot in the manifested universe. How can it be else than where there is motion there is life, and where there is life there is motion?

The basic ideas of Theosophy are corollary to the fact that "everything lives and is conscious but not that all life and consciousness are similar to those of human or even animal beings." Also, that in matter which is universally living and potentially conscious there reside all possibilities including conscious immortality, while complexity of chemical or physical structure is only a means or an opportunity of expressing that which has been inherent in the substance all the time. Therefore, the teachings of the two schools of Biologic thought are incompatible with the teachings of Theosophy.

The "missing link" in Science is the failure to recognize a principle of intelligence in matter. And when Science recognizes that what it calls "the reactions of matter" are the expressions of its intelligence—the power of choice—it will also see that all matter is life, and that the term—the One Life—is but a name for that which is identical in all things and beings.

(*b*) The names of these main divisions of biological thought mark the two schools as opposed in basic theory, yet they share freely in misconceptions and their reflections of the "personal" God" idea, in separating spirit from matter.

The Mechanists are the more materialistic of the two schools. They hold that all action, whether it be the highest meditation or the molecular motion in a stone, is purely mechanical, that it is merely a physical function of the matter composing the form. They show every reason why consciousness is in a stone, that it may *act* as well as a man does, yet all the while insisting that it is *not* alive. Their difficulty lies in labeling aright Life and Consciousness, the uniting of spirit with matter. For they say that conscious action may occur in any object whatsoever, provided it is a suitable instrument. This is, of course, true for the Theosophist as well as for the Mechanist, but the latter fails to see that whatever exists is a suitable instrument, therefore conscious.

The Vitalists hold that within matter, which they deem "alive," there is a vital force or consciousness which impels to action—again, an external power which either invests matter with life or leaves it "inert." Another chief weakness of Vitalism, besides its assumption of a consciousness outside of matter, is what has been

called its inability to deal with the reflex and mechanical actions which the Mechanist extends so grandly to include all growth. The corresponding difficulty of the Mechanists is to explain the continuity of actions. What links one instinctive act to another, uniting a succession of reflexes to fulfill an aim, an end in view? They have no explanation for that which endures throughout a series of actions, nor for the determination among lower forms to perpetuate their pattern. They may argue that an atom (to them non-living) has a tendency to restore and preserve its atomic pattern. This gives to the atom or even the electron a certain purpose to be fulfilled. Thus has the Vitalist again denied the obvious: that intelligence or the carrying out of a purpose—consciousness, in fact—denotes life.

It seems there is no room in either class for the studious Theosophist; yet he should acquaint himself with the problems of both Vitalists and Mechanists to better aid him in his task of education.

(*c*) "Mechanism—or materialism—holds that all human forces, powers, perceptions, are mechanical functions of the matter composing our forms, and which in itself differs not at all from that encased in the smoothly frigid bosom of the stone. In other words, a human thought does not differ in kind from the internal molecular motions of the aforesaid stone." The above quotation from the magazine THEOSOPHY, succinctly brings out the Mechanist viewpoint.

H. P. Blavatsky answers the Mechanist in her article entitled "Psychic and Noetic Action." She states that "all psychic activity, from its lowest to its highest manifestations, is 'nothing but—motion': Yes; it *is* MOTION but not all 'molecular' motion, as the writer means us to infer. Motion as the GREAT BREATH—*ergo 'sound' at the same time*—is the substratum of Kosmic-Motion. It is beginningless and endless, the one *eternal life,* the basis and genesis of the subjective and the objective universe; for LIFE (or Be-ness) is the *fons et origo* of existence or being. But molecular motion is the lowest and most material of its finite manifestations."

She goes on to quote the author of "Nature's Finer Forces," who explains, "It is that wavy motion which is the cause of the evolution of cosmic undifferentiated matter into the differentiated universe . . . From whence does this motion come? This motion is the spirit itself."

The misconception suffered by the Mechanist is precisely the

same as that deluding the Darwinists, namely, that evolution takes its source from matter rather than from Spirit, the Sustainer of All in the Universe. It is obviously absurd to call an instrument the source of the natural powers of the user of that instrument; yet that is what the Mechanist postulates. Matter is simply the vehicle or instrument of the beings using it in the progress of their evolution.

The same article in the magazine THEOSOPHY defines Vitalism: "Vitalism, the minority opposition in biology, considers matter to be inert; but in the case of 'organized' matter inserts into it some postulated form of metaphysical consciousness."

In other words, the Vitalist sees "consciousness" as directing an inert matter which of itself has no consciousness. If this be so, by what mysterious means can consciousness be conceived of as communicating its "will" to an inert "consciousness-less" matter? Conversely, how could such a "matter" receive direction from a "consciousness" which is entirely different than itself, each having nothing in common with the other.

H. P. B., on the other hand, gives us the logical answer as follows: "Occultism regards every atom as an 'independent entity' and every cell as a 'conscious unit.' It explains that no sooner do such atoms group to form cells, than the latter become endowed with consciousness, each of its own kind, and with *free-will* to *act within* the limits of law." Thus we see that the Universe is truly a community of beings from the smallest to the greatest, each a "consciousness" of itself, ever evolving to higher and wider degrees of consciousness. The lack of the Vitalist, then, lies in his denial of the consciousness in matter, which is made up *entirely* of conscious units.

The Theosophist, knowing that all is Spirit or Life, and life is One, can never hold to either the Mechanist viewpoint—which makes of matter the source of everything—nor to the Vitalist theory, which separates matter and consciousness completely.

According to H. P. B., "Darwinism only meets Evolution at its midway point." How would you explain this statement?

(*a*) The Darwinian theory of evolution takes in but one half of the evolutionary scheme, the physical, and completely omits the spiritual line. In thus dealing with the form side of evolution, Darwinism traces back human evolution to the point where physical man as we know him today had his origin. The "midway-point"

for Theosophy is the starting place of Darwinism. The midway-point represents the transition from the astral to the physical. It is the period of gradual solidification or hardening of matter, during which process the human *form* was evolved. "Some of the astral prototypes were involved in the solidification." Those solidified astral prototypes are the fossils which science is discovering today, and which they argue "must be those of creatures which coexisted with the gross physical body of man." As long as science ignores astral evolution they will always be confronted with the "missing link."

Man is a spiritual being, and not any of his forms. "Man never was not." He is, ever was and ever will be, a self-conscious being with the power to change and produce forms suitable for his expression. Man did not spring from the animal kingdom, but, on the contrary, the anthropoid resulted from man through the unnatural union of astral man, at that time of an ape-like form, with huge animals.

(*b*) The midway point of evolution is to be reckoned as a little more than 18 million years ago, when the formerly three separate lines of evolution (1) Spiritual, (2) Intellectual and (3) Bodily, converged. Concrete matter, as we know it, was one of the results of this convergence. From this point on, Darwinism and all the physical plane laws of Science began to operate. The astral prototypes, which are the *real* physical forms, although made up of matter of a much finer degree, passed onto the plane of densest matter and became subject to the factors of differentiation which are solely relied upon by Science as the ultimate cause for the origin of species.

The Darwinian theory, minus the dogmas of natural selection, etc., may be correct so far as physical plane evidence is concerned; but, this evidence being but a chapter in the book of life is wholly inadequate to solve the perplexing problems that confront science, as for example, the problem of the "missing link."

Science in tracing the line of descent of any group or order of mammals may, if there is an abundance of fossil material, succeed in tracing the line down to perhaps two main branches which must have diverged from the same root-type. There Science must come to a dead halt; the root cannot be discovered and shall never be found so long as Science refuses to believe in an astral period of evolution where the primeval root-types of all the plants and animals were evolved.

Theosophy teaches that the form of man in this round is not descended from an ape or any other animal, although in preceding rounds the form of man evolved and passed through the lowest forms of life, the elemental, mineral and vegetable and animal kingdoms. In this round, however, man came before the animals (mammals). The man which passed through the lower kingdoms is not the *real* man, but is the rough mould that was being developed for the use of Man in this round. The limit possible of attainment by the individual intelligence in the new cycle of manifestation is determined by the mass intelligence and mass Karma which was operative on previous earths. Then, when the new cycle begins, every atom strives to follow this plan—the model set by the "heavenly man." The first three rounds are a preparation for the great work to be accomplished in this, the fourth.

Just as there are seven hierarchies of beings that come to this globe from the previous one, so are there seven classes or root-types of plants and animals brought over. The "ground-plan" having been marked out in these ancestral types, they are worked on by elemental, or semi-intelligent beings, under the guidance of the "planetary spirits," that is the Ensouling Dhyan-Chohanic wisdom. When these root-types emerge into physical evolution they differentiate to a certain point within their experience. That experience being limited, intelligent interference is necessary if old types are to be changed for better types. As the lower kingdoms evolve through natural impulse, and as it is man through whom comes the impulse for further evolution, it must be man that "creates" the new species. Under his guidance, however sub-consciously, the elements, or nature forces, work, adding to or depriving the species of certain appendages either needed, or which become useless in the new environment. Through the power of his thought, man, consciously or unconsciously creates all the forms of the lower kingdoms including his own instrument, this instrument being the repertory of all organic forms, and the central point from which these forms radiate. "All the forms that people the earth are so many variations on basic types originally thrown off by man of the third and fourth rounds."

Now, according to Science and Darwinism, there is not intelligence but only blind force behind all forms. Whatever intelligence or mental development a being may have is a result of the mechanical functions of the body. To them it is because of the en-

vironment of an animal and its ability to survive that ensue all the changes in the species. They reason that if an animal cannot change itself by wishing to be something else, then it must be the environment that causes it to evolve. According to Theosophy, those physical agents which contribute to the differentiation of species are only the secondary and subordinate factors in evolution; for behind all these physical changes is the intelligence, the perceiving power, that which is at the very root of our being. It is the moving power, the evolving power which is ever striving for a more perfect instrument to more fully reflect Spirit or the One Life.

What truth if any, is there in the ideas of—(a) "Survival of the Fittest"? (b) "Natural Selection"?

Both of these terms, being based upon materialistic science, have necessarily false values, if not also false ideas; false values, when contrasted with the true values of the three Fundamental Principles of Theosophy. The first, "Survival of the Fittest", we can easily see in physical nature—the strong outlasting the weak. But this, as science does not realize, is merely incidental, a passing phase on the way to perfection, which is spiritual, not physical —perfection gained by ceaseless sacrifice for the good of all Life, of the lower to the higher, of the one unit for all units.

H. P. B. says in Volume I of the *Secret Doctrine,* page 277:

> The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards *a higher life.* There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is a proof of this. The immutable laws that weed out the weak and feeble species, to make room for the strong, and which ensure the "survival of the fittest," though so cruel in their immediate action—all are working toward the grand end.

Man's failure to realize the necessity for sacrifice submerges him in difficulties. He does not know the divine in him is above all changing forms; he is bound by the illusion of matter. There is nothing terrible about the mere change or death of forms. There will be new ones, better for spiritual advancement. "It is not survival in matter which is the end and aim of evolution, but survival in Spirit."

> As to Natural Selection itself, the utmost misconception prevails among many present-day thinkers who tacitly accept the conclusions of Darwinism. It is, for instance, a mere device of rhetoric to credit "Natural Selection" with the power of *originating* species. (*S. D.* II, p. 648).

H. P. B. wrote that the mere variability of type could never possibly account for the marvellous complexities and wonders of Nature. Theosophy teaches that there are no blind natural forces that by accident form Nature as we know her. There are no accidents. There is Law continually operating in all departments of nature. Nothing "just happens." All was consciously planned, as the perfect plan of the future plant must be contained in the seed.

NIRVANA AND KARMA

Life, as we contact, experience, observe, study and define it, Life in short as we *live* it, manifests unmistakably neither design nor chance, but *both*.

Our design is to sip its nectar and avoid its poison, but as each one knows, "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." Each can soliloquize, each can philosophize, but what each one recognizes is that an omnipresent, all-pervading, all-powerful force which we name Law operates in our successes as well as our failures, in producing disease as in causing or restoring health.

It is never the operation of law which upsets us—albeit that is the universal human conscious or unconscious attitude. *Karma,* or Law, "is an undeviating and *unerring* tendency in the Universe to restore *equilibrium*, and it operates incessantly."

Who or what disturbs incessantly the equilibrium which Karma as unerringly restores? Beings do; we do. As long as our intelligence is errant it must necessarily come in conflict with Intelligence itself, which alone could be said to be unerring.

But when we perceive this and study to "act with Nature, not against her," then Karma, which before was "the stern and implacable law of compensation"—or restoration of equilibrium—Karma becomes the *agent magique* which presses to our lips the ambrosia of the "garden of the gods." Of the "three kinds of bliss", the perishable, the infernal, the Divine, we find that each being makes his own share, while participant in that of all others.

Writing to Mr. Sinnett on "accidental death and suicide", one of the *Mahatmas* said: "since you seem so interested with the subject, you can do nothing better than to study the two doctrines—of *Karma* and *Nirvana*."

But why *Nirvana* in such a connection? Why, indeed, unless what is Nirvana to a Mahatma is Karma to us. What makes the difference? The Law—or the way it is regarded and used?

THE UNKNOWN MIND

II

HAVING examined certain aspects of the free mind, it will be well to consider the nature of memory and those of its phases which retard aspiration toward the higher mental states. Memory is an aspect of consciousness. As well postulate self-consciousness without memory as to attempt to create form without a third dimension. Memory is the third of the great aspects of self-consciousness, perception and ideation serving as the other two. Reminiscence is the deeper and therefore the soul aspect of memory—itself a generic term—remembrance and recollection belonging almost exclusively to the brain as man is now constituted. When through self-effort mind becomes focused upon the psycho-spiritual planes, recollection may be related to reminiscence.

If thoughts entertained over a period of time are recalled, there will be found to exist a constant change of subject matter. So rapid and continual are these fluctuations that no consistent reconstruction of thought sequences is possible except to one who is trained in concentration, while the inability to sustain a consistent thought-motive for any appreciable period of time contributes largely to weakness of both will and memory.

So great are the possible combinations among the quadrillions of interrelated cells of the brain cortex that no psychologist has been able adequately to express them. But to this vast index of the physical brain, the Theosophist adds the great mass of memories and resultant possible combinations in the cells of the complete physical man co-ordinated by the inner astral man, plus—mark well—the great store of soul-reminiscence but one plane removed from the higher aspects of the astral brain.

A train of thought will disturb or call up its associated memories and their interrelated combinations. But as the average mind is also colored by the light of personality, there is always that group of mental deposits associated with personal pride and prejudice which sways the thinker. It may readily be seen that very little of the average thinking is actually under the control of the principle which perceives and which knows the real from the unreal.

Inhibited thoughts are also potent for enslaving the mind. Remaining buried in the depths of the lower nature, they are not easily dealt with. They cause many of the eccentricities of present-day

man, for, due to the vibratory nature of the astral light penetrating the whole lower man, there is no possibility of permanently *inhibiting* any mental deposit. Its influence will depend upon the vividness of its inception and the amount of energy necessary to keep it off the conscious plane of thought. The potency of our inhibitions may be compared to the radio waves with which no walls of steel or stone can interfere. Let reason be clouded and the stronger of these deeply hidden memories become actual to the astral senses, and hallucinations result. In such cases if the element of fear is strong, the victim may become a maniac.

All normal minds owe their sane condition to some form of control. This is usually brought about by indirect methods, such as concentration in some form of work; when the mind is not so engaged, amusements are resorted to. But this sooner or later leads to soul weariness, for the soul, which is the real man, is not in a body to be distracted. Under karma it has a given task to perform—that of obtaining full self-consciousness upon this plane while clothed in its seven-fold constitution. It is therefore not uncommon to see despondency overtaking those who have every material wish gratified.

True control results from *direct* methods: distractions being eliminated through self effort, the perceiver may remain constantly aware of the thought processes of the mind, and like a good gardener he destroys the weeds as they appear. As he gains the strength of the spiritual will he tears out the deeply hidden roots. The stream of thought is then given such power that the countless distractions spoken of are unable to affect it, and memory is used as the student uses reference books—only when needed.

But what of the latent stores of knowledge within the soul? Does this aspect of memory influence our lives? To answer these questions we must be willing to search within for the source of character, for in considering soul-memory we are apt to stress the active aspect which includes personalities, actions, and environments from former incarnations—"mental deposits". Far more important is the *use* the soul makes, while in a body, of the knowledge gained. We are the embodiment of knowledge and fail to realize it only because we concentrate upon external activities. Many times this inner knowledge reveals itself as the urge which causes the individual to forsake all in order to develop a special talent in art, music, or what not. Its higher aspect is manifest in those individuals born with an unquenchable thirst for spiritual knowledge which they desire in order to be better able to help

and teach others. They become the Self-illuminated who have learned to draw at will upon all that the soul has gleaned through pain and suffering during many lives.

No surgeon's knife has ever revealed a thought, much less unlocked the secret of memory. Neither does the microscope shed light upon the means employed in the phenomenon of memory. As we are constantly using memory, why cannot we perceive its nature? To a degree the act of memorizing is analogous to photography. The sensitive film must not be exposed; no ray of light must enter the camera other than the momentary flash through the lens which imprints the image upon the film. Who then has seen the image imprint itself? Who knows the precise method? We may prepare the film, build the instrument, take the picture and develop it later, but to see the light rays moulding instantaneously the lights and darks of the picture—that remains esoteric. A like condition exists within us. There is the film, known as the astral light, having seven degrees or aspects of sensitivity. Then there is the brain or instrument to be used. But as mind is now developed, its eye cannot see nor can it of itself understand the actual processes within the brain during the act of memorizing, whether volitional or automatic.

Turning from these processes of the psychic nature, let us ask why is there need for esoteric knowledge? Does it even occur to us that there need be no truth hidden relative to ourselves or our universe? Yet the processes of memory are now so hidden that we have to resort to association of ideas to bring about recollection. Just as there are affinities among human beings, so there are myriads of affinities among the lives that go to make up the body, all connected or interrelated. Among them an idea or picture is broadcast, and affinities respond, whether in waking or dreaming consciousness.

These conditions do not exist within the soul when the sixth and seventh senses are active, for there the camera of the brain is not active. Deep sleep puts the brain mechanism completely at rest: the soul is able to return to its own plane where its "memories" are an unbroken present, wherein no association of ideas is needed to awaken a sequence. This soul present, which is our past during waking, becomes also our future—for the effect is inherent and already set up in its cause. On the bodily plane we consistently refuse to become thus clairvoyant, dividing our "time" into three periods—past, present and future. This is the *maya* of uncontrolled memory. Memory rightly understood, is an ever

present past merging with the present—an already exposed film of the future, not as yet developed upon this physical objective plane.

Modern psychologists remain practically silent upon these problems. They but dogmatize upon human reflexes and reactions to environmental stimuli.

Despite present blindness, man is carried forward by the irresistible impulse of the great karmic cycles. "We are, however, cycling back and cycling forward; *i.e.,* having lost in spirituality that which we acquired in physical development until almost the end of the Fourth Race, we (mankind) are as gradually and imperceptibly losing now in the physical all that we regain once more in the spiritual *re*-evolution. This process must go on until the period which will bring the Sixth Root-Race on a parallel line with the spirituality of the Second, long extinct mankind*." Thus the *Secret Doctrine* points to the upward curve of the arc which will carry us away from the materiality of the age. Already as one scientist puts it, the mechanistic system of last century has been thrown out bag and baggage.

The higher mind is practically unexplored to-day. Only its lower aspects interest the psychologist as yet, and the reactions of the five senses are considered to be the sole causes for behavior. We have lost the clear seeing use of our sixth and seventh senses in the welter of physicality. It is the perceptive power or the sixth sense which is able to record and register the action of the other five, and "the Seventh to preserve the spiritual fruition and remembrance thereof, as in a Book of Life which belongs to Karma." If the individual man is to achieve that perfection which is the *ultima thule* of all evolution, union with the Divine, in himself and in all nature, this can only come about through "Self-induced and self-devised efforts" on all planes—first and foremost here in the body. It is only through the use of the higher mind that this is possible to the individual Ego—"That Ego, progressing in an arc of ascending subjectivity, must exhaust the experiences of every plane[1]."

Let us, then, make it possible for these higher senses to function, and through untiring devotion, use the sense-life of the body in such a way that the mind may become free and God-like in its power. Then may we read both "day and night" from the Book of Life—and understand.

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*—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 537

[1]—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 330.

"CREATION", "EVOLUTION", "EVER-BECOMING"

THESE three terms epitomize and symbolize all that is comprehended in the abstract terms religion, science, philosophy. They are synthesized in *The Secret Doctrine,* whether as a book, as "the accumulated Wisdom of the ages", or as the embodiments and custodians of that Wisdom—the *Mahatmas*, or Great Souls.

H. P. Blavatsky in her writings uses all three of these abstract and concrete terms over and over—these and many others, common coinage or currency in the world of thought. "The rank is but the Guinea's stamp"; to her, words, with whatever meaning stamped, are of no value in themselves. So, like a mint and like a "Pyx-Jury", she allots them only their *bullion* value. It is *that* value, as appraised by the Wisdom-Religion of the Masters, which she tests out, in no matter what coinage or currency that, with us, circulates on its "face value". Whatever the terms used, it is the pure element of truth in them with which *she* is concerned, while, alas, we, possessing no *refined* ideas of our own, think that "all is gold that glitters" in the rosy light of hope, or in the rufous glow of our desires.

In her view, "ALL IS LIFE, and every atom is a LIFE. For every atom in the Universe has the potentiality of self-consciousness in it." Hence, "each of these Beings either *was,* or prepares to become, a man, if not in the present, then in a past or a coming cycle (Manvantara). They are *perfected*, when not *incipient,* men."

Read, in the light of the foregoing, our own notions and those of other men, as expressed in our science, our religion, our philosophy, and, if her views are pure gold, then we can recognize the way we have alloyed what to her is Truth. Read, in the light of the foregoing, what she herself has written on "Science and Theology" in *Isis Unveiled*, what she has to say on "Cosmogenesis and Anthropogenesis" in *The Secret Doctrine*—and we, too, will see with her that while man has learned much that is *true*, he has yet to learn "to accept *Truth* wherever it may be found, and to defend It, even looking popular prejudice straight in the face."

WHAT CAUSES REINCARNATION?

QUESTION: If reincarnation is the fact, what causes it, and why do all men not realize it to be the fact?

—*A Student of the Subject.*

ALL men recognize to some extent that this is a universe of Law; few, however, go beyond that recognition to consider what this means: (*a*) that nothing happens just once, and (*b*) that nothing happens twice exactly the same—yet these truths, when faced, are as self-evident as is the fact of Law itself.

From this abstract or general, and these specific or particular, self-evident truths, it necessarily follows as a corollary that whatever it may be that we perceive, either as object or subject, has been before (under different conditions), and will be again (in still other relations). The fact that it now is, is the proof that it has been and will continue to be. The evidence which, when understood, constitutes "proof" lies not solely in the perceived testimony, but in our ability to fit the evidence together in such a way that what was before not perceived, or was in doubt (for us) now fits in perfectly with all that we know—making a complete whole, whose validity and veridicity we find that we *cannot* doubt.

Our already acquired self-knowledge tells us that we *are;* our senses and their every contact bear witness externally to the same truth; hence no man can doubt for an instant that he *is.* If he now is, at this very instant, then he *must* always have been and must forever be, at any and every imaginable moment. If, on the contrary, we *are,* but once were *not,* and will hereafter *cease to be,* then our being is unique. If our being, or that of any other, is unique, then this is *not,* in any sense, "a universe of law", but of miracle, chance, accident—all of which imply that the matter under observation has occurred, and that whatever is has occurred, but this one time—which is to believe that which all the evidence, and our own doubts, tell us *cannot* be the case. "There is *no* existence for that which does *not* (now) exist, nor is there any non-existence for what (*now*) exists." These words, from the ancient *Bhagavad-Gita,* need but to be pondered in the mind, dwelt on in relation to one's own self or being, and that of any other or others, for the truths that they embody to become self-evident to any man. He will *know* the fact of his own immortality, whether he yet understands it *in all its bearings,* or not. "Student" and all others who

still have doubts on the subject are invited to try this out for themselves.

But our senses, our minds, and our self-consciousness alike tell us as unmistakably that what is conveyed and implied in the word "immortality", while it tells us "the truth and nothing but the truth", does not tell us "the *whole* truth", for: (*a*) everything we know in any sense, ourselves included, *seeks* change, causes change, experiences change, universally and constantly; (*b*) more or less *identifies self* with change; (*c*) grows as constantly in the realization that *self is one*, while *change is multiple*. This "desire" for change is everywhere apparent in everything, that is to say, is uniformly observable through our senses externally, and as uniformly observable through our minds internally. The *fact* of change, or the "mortal", is, therefore, as completely testified to as is the fact of the "immortal". How are these two seemingly "irreconcilable" facts to be themselves reduced (or restored) to *unity*, coherence, so that the "evidences" of both shall *prove to be harmonious*? In other words, how is sense knowledge, mind knowledge, self-knowledge to be unified, so that henceforth, in the words of the *Gita*, one is forever freed from "doubt", "*not* disturbed by anything that may come to pass"?

Just as the real meaning of "immortality" is to be gained along the lines indicated, so with the real meaning of "change" or the "mortal". What *is* change? This, also, has to be meditated.

"Meditation" is the letting-go, for the time being, of the identification of self with circumstance, whether in the form of action, sense-perception, or mental perception (as known by us). This "letting go" involves four distinct steps or stages, two of which are negative, that is, involve a retreat from that which is known through sense and mind; and two of which are positive, that is, the concurrent advance into a third and fourth state or condition or circumstance of being which, relatively speaking, is as much beyond sense and mind as human consciousness is beyond animal and vegetal consciousness. A being in and of a higher state can descend into the human state, or vice versa, but the *human states* cannot either ascend or descend. Either to ascend to a higher state, or to descend to a lower state, from the one now occupied, necessarily requires that the being, the self, shall "let go" of any and all connection with the present state. Is not this self-evident? And is it not equally self-evident that this transfer of one's being, consciousness, or "self", from a lower to a higher state, or vice versa,

in *no sense whatever* means either extinction for the being which rises or descends, or for the state or states in which at one time and another he may choose to "live, move, and have his being"? "Change", then, is neither more nor less than a transfer of state or form when looked at in itself, and then will be seen as self-evident that nothing and no one can be fully in more than one state or form *at a time*. Looked at the other way about, that is to say from the standpoint of the self, or being, making the transit up or down, it becomes equally self-evident that all *memory* of the state desired to be left must, for the time being, be either intentionally blotted out by the being itself, or be blotted out by other factors—else the attempted transfer of the self from one "plane" to another will be a failure; all that will result will be a partial diffusion of the consciousness of self through two or more planes or states at the same time, a partial identification of self with the circumstantiality of which the states themselves consist.

This *complete* transfer of self or being, from below up, is "transmigration"; from above down is "reincarnation", and the proper term for either and both is "metempsychosis", the latter term referring to the self, or being, while the other two relate to the state or form entered, or departed from.

The "Cause" of reincarnation? What better statement to meditate upon than that contained in the *Rig-Veda*:

> "Desire (for 'change') first arose in THAT (SELF), which was the *primal germ of mind* ('beginning' of 'Universal Ideation'); and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered to be the bond *uniting* Entity with non-Entity (the 'mortal' with the 'immortal')."

All "change", then, is caused by the "desire", conscious or unconscious, for Self-manifestation, Self-expression, Self-experience, Self-*assertion*. Note what is *common* to all these states, forms, actions: *Self*.

In this light is it not Self-evident that the *cause* of any and all change is to be sought for, not in the manifestation, but in the Self—and nowhere else?

"Reincarnation" is commonly regarded and believed, even by the best of minds, in a personal, special, or otherwise limited sense. *All* "change" is reincarnation, partial or complete, *i.e.*, is a partial or entire transfer of the consciousness or being or self from one state or form or relation to another. If complete, it is "death" from the point of view of those remaining in the state just left, but

"birth" from the point of view of those already on the plane of perception and action which the being has just entered.

Whether called "change", transmigration, reincarnation, metempsychosis, "correlation" or "metamorphosis", or by any other name, is all one: what is to be kept steadily in *mind* is that this transfer of consciousness may and does occur in either of two ways—(*a*) through "natural impulse" (without the Will of the being concerned); (*b*) through "*self*-induced and *self*-devised efforts" (because of the Will of the being concerned).

"Sages *searching* with their intellect" to find the answer to the two questions with which this paper begins, must necessarily have used their Will as well as their Intellect. This use of Intellect and Will *is* "meditation". It can concern itself either with manifestation or with Self. In the former case it is the search for right *conduct* in all the affairs of life, including the use made of the mind and the senses. In the latter case it is the search to find the Cause as well as the Effect of all manifestation and experience. When achieved, it is the "finding of the Self", the "awakening of the Self to the SELF."

Any man is free at any time to use his Will and Intellect in the manner shown—or to refuse to do so. So long as *he* "desires" to enjoy or suffer in his present state of consciousness, who or what can restrain his self from so living? But if he turns his desire in the other direction, then, "Him all the Sages stand ready to aid".

HELP FROM LIFE TO LIFE

The reason you have had help is that in other lives you gave it to others. In every effort you made to lighten another mind and open it to Truth, you were helped yourself. Those pearls you found for another and gave to him, you really retained for yourself in the act of benevolence. For when one lives thus to help others, he is thereby putting in practice the rule to try and "kill out all sense of separateness", and thus gets little by little in possesion of the true light.—*W. Q. J.*

RECOVERING MEMORY OF PAST LIVES

QUESTION: *While I "believe" in reincarnation and karma, I have no knowledge of my own past lives. Honestly, I am a little "tired" of abstract considerations, theoretical disquisitions, "arguments" on this subject, so I ask the Question direct, How shall I recover the memory of past incarnations? Please answer as directly as you can.*

WHAT is meant by "directly"? What is meant by "I", by "arguments", by "reincarnation and karma", and above all what is meant by *knowledge*? We all, the Teachers as well as ourselves, use the same terminology, but each one has in mind his own definitions of terms and is all too apt to assume that others who employ the same words mean the same by them as we do. The Teachers may be assumed to know, scientifically and precisely, what They mean, and what we mean, in our questions and Their answers; but have we so clarified our own minds that we also have clear, consistent, and clean mental conceptions and perceptions?

Knowledge, as They use the term in Their sense, means Spirit, Nirvana, the *highest state of being* to which *any* "Soul" can rise. "Memory of past lives", to Them, means the ability to rise to that state, to return from it, to bring here into the human state of being whatever is needed for the immediate occasion. This acquired ability is called *Samma Sambuddhi*, and those who have it are called *Mahatmas*.

Our *desire* to "know our past lives" is only one of the "conditions precedent" to our gaining access to that state. Theosophy is the "*mathematics* of the Soul": what would we think of the discrimination of one who, although he desires to be a Mathematician, wants to *know* "transcendental equations" by hear-say, or by "skipping" one or more of the "intermediate stages"?

Recorded Theosophy is the "course of study" covering those intermediate stages. That course of study is the same for all; its application rests with each individual for himself: *Live the Life, and ye shall* know *the Doctrine*. The Adepts can *teach, we* have to do the studying and applying, *i.e.*, the *learning*.

ON THE LOOKOUT

"World Fellowship of Faiths"

Theosophy has received a copy of the notice and appeal sent out in September in connection with the Second International Congress to be held in England in July, 1936.

The Fellowship itself is eminently sponsored. The Gaekwar of Baroda, one of the most important of the Native Indian States, is International Chairman; Sir Francis Younghusband the British National Chairman; Mr. Herbert Hoover is the American National President, with Bishop Francis McConnell for American National Chairman, and Kedarnath Das Gupta and C. F. Weller for American General Executives. Mr. Arthur Jackman of London is the British Organizing Secretary.

Other Supporters

The Fellowship and the announced Congress is declared to have "many supporters in Great Britain" and among the notable names given are the following: Sir Norman Angell, the Deans of Canterbury and St. Paul's, Dr. J. S. Haldane, Arthur Henderson, Dr. L. P. Jacks, Alfred Noyes, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Lord Rutherford, Canon Sheppard, and the Bishop of Thorndike. All these are persons who have earned laurels of their own in various fields of human endeavor. Several of the distinguished company are known by repute to Theosophists for activities in psychical research, and it is safe to say that most, probably all, of those interested in the Fellowship and its Congress have some acquaintance with Theosophy and the three Objects of the Theosophical Movement, the second of which includes just such bodies and individuals as are concerned in some particular Faith and its fellowship with other religious bodies.

The "World's Parliament of Religions" at the Chicago Fair in 1893, the first of the kind ever held, was due in its inception to Theosophists, was participated in by them, and gave rise to many subsequent efforts along similar lines. The presently announced Congress is, therefore, both historically and in its objects a product of the Theosophical Movement and as such will have the sympathy of all who have at heart the removal of sectarian differences, a rapprochement among "men of good-will" irrespective of the distinctions of caste, creed, or color.

Program of the Congress

The official Announcement advises: "A prayer that 'the Nations may be united in a firmer fellowship' is being offered in the Churches of England at this time of world tension. Undoubtedly this is also the prayer of devout followers of all the great religions." Undoubtedly the motivation behind both the prayers and the Fellowship efforts is of a commendable spirit, and as undoubtedly this is and must continue to be a period of world tension. Yet all this freely recognized, there must reside in the hearts and minds of the devout followers of all the great religions, the deep-seated feeling and the knowledge that prayers, good intentions, and amicable discussions among the pacific-minded have never yet been efficacious to relieve either national or religious tensions.

Partisan devotion to the interests of one's own country or creed is all too often mistaken for true patriotism and true religion. Thus education is required on a higher level than either nationalism or sectarianism. Those who see all this, must needs take a bold, a militant stand for that principle embodied in the motto of an Indian royal line adopted as the ensign of the Theosophical Movement: "There is no Religion higher than Truth".

"World Fellowship Through Religion"

The program for the Congress calls for ten sessions at London and ten in Oxford at which "addresses (to be followed by discussion) will be given by representative spokesmen on: 'World Fellowship through Religion' ". In addition there will be three public meetings in London when "persons of international repute will speak on: 'The Supreme Spiritual Ideal' ".

Religions, as they exist, not less than nations as now constituted, are essentially and fundamentally competitive, therefore in actuality rivals. A fellowship through Religion is possible, but not through religion*s*; just as fellowship between peoples is possible, but not through any league of rival nations.

If the agenda and the spokesmen of the forthcoming Congress recognize these basic truths, sound them unhesitatingly, and if its officers, agents and supporters uphold them as devotedly as the partisans and patriots of antagonistic creeds and countries support their special interests and claims—then great good will be accomplished and nourished. Otherwise, for all their good intentions, these, like many similar good intentions, will but go to provide

paving material for Dr. Johnson's hell. They will belong in the contemptuous category attributed to Frederick the Great of Prussia: "My people may say what they please, but I do what I please".

"HEIL HITLER!"

G. P. Putnam's Sons have published Stefan Lorant's Diary: *I Was Hitler's Prisoner.* Lorant, editor of a German weekly paper, steered clear of political commitments, but prospered to the envy of his Nazi competitors. Apparently for no other reason than his neutral course he was arrested and his book is the story of what he observed, rather than of his own sufferings. When released, after less than a year's exile, he found his wife aged by his ordeal, his young son hesitant as at the approach of a stranger. Said Lorant to the lad: "Aren't you going to greet me?" His son regarded him gravely, raised his hand to a Nazi salute, and replied: "Heil Hitler!"

What a commentary as well as contrast on the "fellowship of faiths".

SECRET OF LIGHTNING

In corroboration of the facts and hidden hints on lightning, life, and knowledge about them in *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and the *Secret Doctrine* (1888), there have been countless observations and experiences since then. In popular news there was, back in August 7, 1932, some excellent testimony in an article in the New York *Times* on "Lightning's Riddles Science Has Solved," relating quite a few observations similar to those referred to in *Isis Unveiled.* Then appeared " 'Thunderbolt Rays' Are Discovered Constantly 'Spraying' the Earth" (April 28, 1934), along with much that has been said of "Cosmic Rays." Out of further investigations with high speed photography came "New Lightning Lore" (July 11, 1934) and the "Dual Nature of Lightning's Flash" (The *Literary Digest*, July 14, 1934).

CURIOUS FREAKS OF LIGHTNING

All this was discussed in "On the Lookout", THEOSOPHY for April, 1935. In "Lightning's Secret's Told" (New York *Times,* July 28, 1935), the writer says:

> At the midsummer season the news inevitably reveals a variety of deeds performed by lightning—some tragic, some

> spectacular, some freakish. . . . There was a report from Turkey of ball lightning that performed culinary feats in a kitchen, and there was one from Italy of a helpless paralytic who was restored to health and vigor when lightning struck a tree under which he had taken shelter.

The incidents might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but the secret remains untold so far as popular learning is concerned. For true knowledge of the nature and cause of the phenomenal forces in nature proceeding from the *intelligences* creating or evolving them, one must search in the philosophy of Theosophy and in one's own nature.

The Brainless Baby

In the case of the " 'Brainless' Baby" who "Lived for 27 Days," the New York *Times*, August 18, 1935, reported: "Autopsy Reveals Infant Was Born With Fluid-Filled Cranial Cavity. Appeared to be Normal. Cried and Reacted to Pain, but Fell Ill After Week—Doctors Studying Rare Case:"

> An autopsy . . . revealed a case rare to medical science when a baby boy was found to have lived twenty-seven days with fluid in the cranial cavity instead of a developed brain. . . .
>
> According to a member of the hospital staff, the infant, for its first six days of life, was outwardly perfectly normal. It partook of food regularly, cried as all babies cry, and moved its hands, arms and legs.

Evidently it takes the dynamite of extreme cases to explode the idea that "brain dictates behavior" and something more to uproot "the opinion that reflexes had probably caused the leg and arm movements, as well as other functioning!" Reflexes of what? and why not call everybody's actions "reflexes" in such case? But these labels serve only to disguise rather than to explain. It was further observed: "How this child could have responded to pain is one of the mysteries of the case." It also puts heredity in the ordinary sense at naught so far as an explanation is concerned. There is no other rational explanation than to affirm that it is the indwelling Ego, the Soul that brings about the manifestations of life in a human form.

Atmosphere of Pulsating Life

Theosophy teaches that "Motion is eternal *per se*, and in the manifested Kosmos it is the Alpha and Omega of that which is

called electricity, galvanism, magnetism, sensation—moral and physical—thought, and even life, on this plane. Thus fire, on our plane, is simply the manifestation of motion, or life." (*Transactions*, 115). Seen in this light, how vastly greater is the significance of those observations made with regard to the earth's atmosphere. Says an editorial in the New York *Times*, September 1, 1935, on "The Inferno in the Sky":

> If we could take our stand on the moon and equip ourselves with "glasses" that would enable us to see electric radiations to which we are now perhaps mercifully blind we would behold a wondrous earth. It would not only glow with sunlight reflected by the atmosphere but shimmer electrically. At 60, 120 and 180 miles above the surface are three billowing layers. Like the aurora they gleam and play, rise and fall, to provide a spectacle that changes as the sun is now above and now below a given horizon on the earth.

ELECTRIC WRAPPINGS

> Ionosphere is the generic name given to these electrical wrappings. That they are really flickering high in the sky there can be no doubt. Radio waves of different lengths ("colors" if we could see them) are reflected by the ionosphere. Thus do the wrappings betray themselves. Without them there could be no wireless communication. For the waves that carry messages across oceans would be shot out in straight lines into space, to be lost forever.
>
> Why is there an ionosphere? Because the ultra-violet rays of the sun and perhaps its X-rays strip atoms of outer electrons. Thus bereft the atoms become ions—wanderers. Their deprivation excites them. Dashing about, seeking to heal themselves by capturing free electrons they account for the conductivity of the thin, almost vacuous atmosphere above us.

Whatever grains of truth there may be in the explanation, it is certain that taken in a purely materialistic sense it would lead to naught but false conclusion, whereas, seen in the light of eternal Motion and life forces, the observations are just so much further testimony to the teaching of the *Secret Doctrine* on Fohat and the atoms as applied universally and to the earth.

RE-EMPLOYMENT

"Key to Recovery in Re-Employment," says the then current issue of the Guaranty Survey published by one of New York's oldest and most conservative banks, the Guaranty Trust Company —which Company adds that this solution can come about only

through private business expansion. Other factors are suggested and implicit in the same Survey:

> "The government has made various attempts to solve the problem, thus far without much apparent success. The evidence is somewhat conflicting. . . .
>
> "On the whole, the business situation seems distinctly better than it was two years ago, although it is doubtful to what extent the improvement is a result of natural recuperative forces and to what extent it is a consequence of the government's recovery program. . . .
>
> "The public debt is increasing at a rapid rate, mainly because of the cost of caring for the unemployed. Such a situation may be defensible as a temporary expedient but not as a permanent policy. . . .
>
> "The only escape from the dilemma is through private business recovery. This is the sole alternative to the financial disorder and the moral disintegration that lie in the direction of long-continued unemployment relief. It follows that the greatest task of government and business is to cooperate in every possible way in helping private industry and trade to put men back to work.
>
> "The principal steps necessary to this end consist fully as much in the avoidance or abandonment of unwise measures as in the adoption of wise ones. . . . "

Cycles and Cycles

A confirmation of the Law of Cycles is found through years of painstaking research, dogged persistence, observation and discovery by science to be that of solar and weather cycles. The "Secret of the Weather" is attempted to be traced by Dr. Charles Greeley Abbot, fifty-three-year-old Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, to "weather cycles," "solar cycles" and a "grand cycle" including "lesser cycles." The real secret, however, is not only the cycles themselves, but their cause and causes. The *Literary Digest*, August 31, 1935, reports:

> Doggedly comparing them (masses of data accumulated for years on fluctuations in solar radiation) with each other, with tree-ring records of ancient weather, with weather-controlled laminations of clay in the bottom of old glacial lake-beds, Doctor Abbot was certain that some cyclical relation must exist among all these natural conditions.
>
> Human brains having failed, he invented a brass brain—the periodometer. This new kind of calculating machine he fed

> data from thousands of solar observations. The machine gave back integrations of cycles. Solar radiation was found to have no fewer than twelve recurring periodicities, ranging in length from seven to sixty-eight months.
>
> Added, they enabled him to predict the future behavior of the sun, but not the weather. Forecasts would run true for about fifteen years, then unexplainable reversals popped up.
>
> He reconsidered, determined not to give up. Then came the capital discovery that solar cycles and weather cycles both would fit into a grand cycle of twenty-three years. In this grand cycle all the lesser cycles are contained as aliquot parts (to illustrate, six is an aliquot part of twelve and eighteen, since it is contained in them an exact number of times).

RESULTS OF OBSERVATIONS

The results obtained by Dr. Abbot enabled him to predict general weather trends with a fairly good percentage of accuracy. They may be compared by readers of THEOSOPHY with the observations of Prof. T. J. J. See, in "On the Lookout" for September, 1935. The discrepancies simply show that all the factors involved are not known, nor can it be said by science for how long such empirical results would hold true before "unexplainable reversals" would "pop up." Just as the mind is shown superior to the brain, so is all comprehended in the Supreme Spirit.

Regarding the cycles, "as the sidereal motions *do* regulate and determine other events on Earth—besides potatoes and the periodical disease of that useful vegetable . . . those events have to be allowed to find themselves predetermined by even simple astronomical computations." (*S. D.* I, 645).

"RHYTHMIC PULSE" OF THE EARTH

Prof. W. W. Watts Suggests Pull of Sun and Moon May Help in Making Land Masses, and the New York *Times*, September 5, 1935, observes:

> A half century ago it was suggested that bursts of land-building energy had come at intervals of millions of years and that the earth, like its smallest organism, had a rhythmic pulse of its own. Present-day physicists and geologists think they have detected the driving power of such a pulse in radioactivity within the earth's crust. . . .
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> Unquestionably, (said Professor Watts), there is a "pulse within a pulse" helping to build the earth today, but its causes he found still obscure . . . perhaps there have been other forces still unknown. . . .

The best Professor Watts could do to answer his own questions was to recall that the evolution of life on earth had not been uniform, and that there had been periods of waxing and waning in the history of life on earth. In such an evolutionary process, he admitted, the changing formation of the earth may have played a part, but it was "trivial" in its influence on mankind compared with the growth of the grasses with which man fed and clothed himself or compared with the evolution of man's brain.

What Is the "Guiding Principle" of the Brain?

Pointing out that the brain of a twenty-ton dinosaur was about the size of a large chicken egg, while the brain of a 170-pound man weighed about three and one-half pounds, Professor Watts declared:

"Even though we can know nothing of its material, this steadfast growth in the guiding principle, through the millions of centuries that have gone to its development, is surely one of the most remarkable conclusions that we owe to geology. Of all the wonders of the universe of which we have present knowledge, from the electron to the atom, from the virus and bacillus to the oak and the elephant, from the tiniest meteor to the most magnificent nebula, surely there is nothing to surpass the brain of man.

"An instrument capable of controlling every thought and action of the human body, the most intricate mechanism ever devised; of piercing the secrets and defining the laws of nature; of recording and recalling every adventure of the individual from his cradle to his grave; of inspiring or of ruling great masses of mankind; of producing all the gems of speech and song, of poetry and art, that adorn the world, all the thoughts of philosophy and all the triumphs of imagination and insight: it is indeed the greatest marvel of all.

"And when we contemplate the time and energy, the sacrifice and devotion, that this evolution has cost, we must feel that we are still far from the end of this mighty purpose: that we can confidently look forward to the further advance which alone could justify the design and skill lavished on this great task throughout the golden ages that have gone."

Snake Venom as Medicine

That there is a light and a dark side, a right and wrong use of nature is more than suspected among observant students of nature's

way and lore. A striking example of this fact is found in the use of "Snake Venom for Medicine," "Western Physicians, Following the Practices of the East, Make Increasing Use of It." Says the New York *Times Magazine*, September 15, 1935:

> Almost all medicines are poisons. The difference between the lethal action of a potent drug and its curative action is the quantity of the substance administered. For this reason the science of posology (the study of the doses of drugs) has assumed vast importance in the practice of medicine. As time goes on one becomes impressed with the fascinating thought that in the fearful alchemy of nature the most powerful poisons are sometimes the most useful drugs.

The article then goes on to enumerate various experiments in the application of snake venom as antidote to numerous ailments. Enough has been learned to emphasize the old expression that what may be one man's meat may be another's poison. Something more than the so-called purely physical reactions of life must be taken into account to understand the problem, as Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the Rockefeller Institute, believes he is finding out.

THE SOUL OF MAN

"Dr. Carrel Ponders the Nature and the Soul of Man" observes a New York *Times Book Review*, September 29, 1935, of "Man, The Unknown" by Alexis Carrel. The review has something of interest to the Theosophist both as to the quotations from Dr. Carrel's work and the comments of the reviewer as Professor of Biology in John Hopkins University. They show a decided change for the better in the thought of the day. While the ideas on the subject of the human Soul are still a sorry mixture of materialistic science and anthropomorphic religion, yet there is a reaching out to something greater and truer, an unmistakable sign of the powerful impetus of the Theosophical Movement and its great and fundamental truths. Says the reviewer of Dr. Carrel's book:

> For probably the first time in history the Soul has taken a duly appointed place in a first-rate professional treatise on biology. The soul is said to be a "profoundly mysterious entity" that is "the aspect of ourselves that is specific of our nature and distinguishes man from all other animals." Furthermore, we are told that "the *laws* (reviewer's italics) of mysticity become known before those of physiology." . . .
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> It is categorically stated that "knowledge of the external world may come to man through other channels than sense

> organs. It is certain that thought may be transmitted from one individual to another, even if they are separated by long distance. These facts which belong to the new science of metapsychics, must be accepted, just as they are. They constitute a part of the reality." . . .
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> Telepathy and clairvoyance . . . may or may not be realities. . . . And the only way to determine whether they are or not is to investigate the matter by the most thorough and critical techniques that can be devised, instead of snootily putting them beyond the pale of respectability. . . . And it will want a lot of proving to convince the world that mysticism is as effective a nut-cracker as science.

Book of Ram

Theosophists in the West are more or less familiar with the great and ancient epic, the *Ramayana*, but comparatively few of them know anything of its living exponent, the *Book of Ram*, a popular version, not rendition, of the *Ramayana*. Its author, Tulsi Das, whom the Britannica calls "the greatest and most famous of Hindi poets", lived during the middle segment of the sixteenth century. His Rama is the living hero of India since that epoch.

In every town of India there is enacted every year, in a specially consecrated spot, the life of Rama, as visioned and recorded by Tulsi Das, much as the passion play is re-enacted at Ober-Ammergau in the West. Imagine all Europe and America each year enthralled participants in the Judean drama, vitally affected by it throughout their lives—and you have some faint image or shadow of this vital factor in Indian popular religion.

Luzac & Co., of London, for many, many years dependable custodians of Indian treasures for the Western mind, have brought out a modest, paper-bound volume of 143 pages which gives in understandable form the chief episodes of this Hindi "Pilgrim's Progress." Unfortunately, the Publisher's notice does not give the price, but which must be little for the value given. The volume may be obtained through any book-dealer.

"The Origin of Species"

With the exception of Sir Arthur Keith, the greatest living scientists view Darwinian evolution much as our great living theologians view the biblical creeds of their forefathers. Even those who still cling to modified Darwinian theories have had to shift their defenses—that is, erect new ones. The *New York Times* (a

leading conscripted contributor to *On the Lookout*, as our readers will long since have noted), in its issue of September 8, 1935, comments at some length, from which we quote:

> (the Darwinian defender) finds it necessary to shift the struggle for existence from the forest and the sea to the chromosomes and the genes. . . . In other words, even conservatives realize that natural selection cannot account for the origin of species. . . .
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> Natural selection falls back on chance as an explanation of the origin of species. "Such a course I regard as unscientific," exclaims Professor E. W. McBride, one of the ablest zoologists in Great Britain and a Lamarckian to boot. "An animal is not a mere piece of clockwork, but a centre of active striving. It rises up to meet the environment, and its effort alters its growth in every character."

All this is not merely "good reading" to the Theosophist, but betokens the slow drift of "practical" Modern science in the direction of the Esoteric explanation of Cosmogenesis and Anthropogenesis.

"THE TIBETAN 'BOOK OF THE DEAD' "

Mr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz's translation or rendition of the Tibetan counterpart of the Roman Catholic Ritual for the dead—perhaps that historic Christian Church's antetype in more senses than one—is, like the Tantrik books of India, a formulary of magical practices—and practices of black magic at that. A crop of follow-up books is increasing, all derived from one and another Oriental practitioner of "Yoga". Theosophists should not confuse the "Tibetan" of Mr. Evans-Wentz's title with the Tibetan so often spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky. His "Book of the Dead" is a ritual of "Red-Cap", not of "Yellow-Cap" magic. Nor should the book and its practices be confused with the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*—its exact antithesis. That some such warning may be worth placing of record would seem to be indicated by the fact that so well-known a writer as M. A. Augustin-Thierry in so well-known a publication as the *Temps* of Paris seems to have failed to grasp the basic nature of this ritual—as did Mr. Evans-Wentz himself, though the latter is, we believe, affiliated with one of the theosophical societies and should know better.